

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

March 2020

Universal School

In Pursuit of Spiritual and Academic Excellence

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Frankly, Frannie* (AJ Stern)

Frannie is still in elementary school, but she's ready for a real job. During a field trip to the local radio station, she might get her chance. The radio host is missing—in the middle of his show!



She's determined to fill in, with hilarious results. Book one in the Frankly, Frannie series.

■ *The Great Gran Plan* (Elli Woollard)

What do you get when you cross the Three Little Pigs with Little Red Riding Hood? A picture book adventure where the big bad wolf is plotting to eat Granny, and a pig is on a mission to rescue her! (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie: A Story About Edna Lewis* (Robbin Gourley)

Edna was raised on a Virginia farm where she learned to cook with foods her family grew, including apples. This true story tells how she grew up to become an award-winning chef who was known for using farm-fresh ingredients.



■ *The Truth About Bears: Seriously Funny Facts About Your Favorite Animals* (Maxwell Eaton III)

A trio of bear narrators—polar, brown, and black—add humor to this nonfiction book. Your child will discover where bears live, how big they are, and what their tracks look like. Includes cartoon illustrations and easy-to-read text, maps, and diagrams.



Writing about me

“Personal narrative” is just a fancy term for a true story about the person your child knows best—herself! She's learning to write that kind of story in school, and you can help her at home with these activities.

Outstanding openings

A strong opening makes readers want to keep reading. Ask your youngster to name something your family did recently (say, visited a museum). Then, each of you can write two opening sentences for a story about it. Write one that doesn't give much information (“We went to a museum”) and one that's more inviting (“My favorite museum has a giant elephant statue”). Trade papers, and tell which sentence you each like better and why.

Details

Vivid details paint pictures for readers. You and your child could each secretly think of a topic and write three sentences that give details about it. If your youngster picks music class, details might include



“The piano has smooth black and white keys,” “We shake shiny bells while we sing,” and “Sometimes we dance to music.” Read your sentences aloud, and try to guess each other's topic.

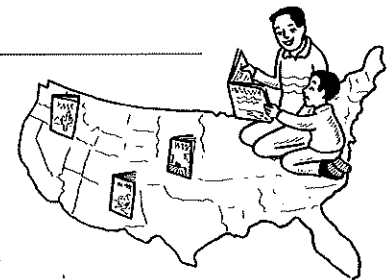
Excellent endings

It's common for new writers to wrap up a story with “Then we went home” or “Then we went to bed.” Work together to write a more creative final sentence for a story about your day. (“The March wind howled outside, and we fell asleep hoping to dream about spring.”)♥

A celebration of reading

March 2 is Read Across America Day. Celebrate with your youngster by using books to learn about different places and languages in our country. Here's how:

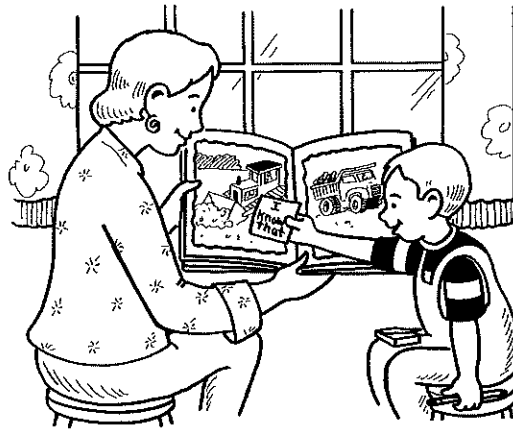
- Look for a library book set in a different part of the country. Depending on where you live, your child could read about a youngster growing up in a seaside town, a mountain village, or a big city. As you read together, encourage him to compare his life to the character's—how are they similar and different?
- Many languages are spoken in America! Ask a librarian to help you find a book with words in two languages, including the one your family speaks at home. You and your child could learn a few words in the other language and use them in conversations.♥



Use your knowledge bank

Your youngster's brain holds a key to better reading comprehension—his “bank” of knowledge. Try these strategies that will help him use what he already knows to understand new information.

Before. Unlock your child's knowledge by doing a book preview together. Look at the pictures, and ask him what they make him think of. He might say a photo of a bulldozer reminds him of a construction



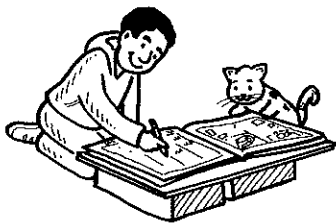
site in your neighborhood. Then you could ask what other construction vehicles he thinks the book might mention.

During. Keep your youngster on the lookout for familiar and unfamiliar information while you read to him. He could write “I knew that!” to stick on a page that mentions a bulldozer scooping dirt and “Cool new fact!” to put on a page that explains what a forklift does.

After. Go back to the pages your child marked, and let him tell you what he learned. Did he find a new fact about something that was familiar? He might say he discovered that some bulldozers have wheels instead of tracks.♥

Parent to Parent Write a nonfiction book

My son Samuel loves nonfiction books. He especially seems to enjoy the diagrams and other graphics. One day, after we'd read a book about sea animals, I noticed him drawing and labeling a diagram of our house. I asked what he was doing, and he explained that he was writing his own nonfiction book about our pets.



Samuel's diagram showed our cat lounging in a sunny window and our cockatiel on her perch. Next, he wrote a page comparing cats and birds. It was adorable—he wrote that you can snuggle with a cat, but a bird can ride on your shoulder.

He stapled the pages together and drew a book cover. Next, Samuel is going to write a nonfiction book about soccer.♥



Q&A Reading to siblings

Q My daughters, ages 4 and 6, have very different interests. Do you have any tips for picking books to read aloud that they'll both enjoy?

A Here's an idea: Ask each child to choose a library book she thinks the other would like. Your little one might pick a story about origami for her big sister, and your older daughter may choose a story about rock collecting for your younger one. They'll learn kindness, and they'll be more inclined to listen to stories they picked out.



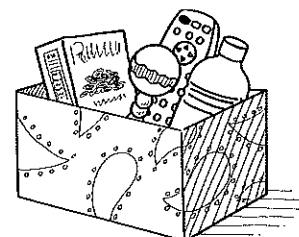
Then, when you choose books, keep in mind that your older child may enjoy a story that's too young for her if it's on a favorite topic. And your little one will find it easier to pay attention to a harder book that matches her interests. Finally, broaden their interests by selecting books on topics unfamiliar to both children.♥

Fun with Words What doesn't belong?

Which word doesn't sound like the others—*button*, *bean*, *noodle*, or *bow*? If your youngster said *noodle*, she's paying attention to beginning sounds (*noodle* is the only word that doesn't begin with the *b* sound). Play this game to help her practice hearing sounds in words.

Let your child fill a box with three objects having the same beginning sound (*rattle*, *raisins*, *remote*) and one that starts with a different sound (*bottle*).

Then, you pick the item that doesn't belong in the box (*bottle*). Or you might deliberately make a mistake (*rattle*). Can your youngster correct you? Now you refill the box, and have her figure out which of your objects doesn't belong.



Variations: Choose items that share an ending sound (like *-en* as in *mitten*) or vowel sound (perhaps short *a* as in *cap*).♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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